

## ANNOUNCEMENT OF FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Federal Agency Name(s): Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (OAR), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Department of Commerce

Funding Opportunity Title: Sea Grant-NOAA Regional Team Collaboration Grants

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: NOAA-OAR-SG-2011-2002938

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 11.417, Sea Grant Support

Dates: Applications are due to Grants.gov by 5:00 p.m. (EDT) June 3, 2011. The anticipated start date for projects is October 1, 2011.

Funding Opportunity Description: For FY2011, the NOAA National Sea Grant College Program and Office of Program Planning and Integration anticipate making available up to \$240,000 to support projects that advance climate adaptation, sustainable seafood, coastal and marine spatial planning, Arctic research and management, Gulf of Mexico restoration, and/or ecosystem-based management as outlined in the NOAA FY2011 Annual Guidance Memorandum ([http://www.ppi.noaa.gov/PPI\\_Capabilities/Documents/AGMs/FY13-17\\_AGM.pdf](http://www.ppi.noaa.gov/PPI_Capabilities/Documents/AGMs/FY13-17_AGM.pdf) ).

These regional collaboration grants will be awarded only to proposals endorsed jointly by the NOAA Regional Teams and the Sea Grant programs in the region. Although other federal, state, tribal, Native Hawaiian, other native cultures, academic and non-profit or non-governmental organizations can act as partners, the Project PI and co-PI of the grant must be a NOAA Federal employee and a Sea Grant Program employee.

Requests for individual projects may not exceed \$30,000. NOAA employees, non-Federal applicants, or both are eligible to receive funds on each proposal. Up to eight grants (one per NOAA region) of up to \$30,000 each are expected to be awarded through a competitive process, subject to the availability of funds.

## FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

### I. Funding Opportunity Description

#### A. Program Objective

The NOAA National Sea Grant College Program was established by Congress to promote responsible use and conservation of the nation's ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes resources. Sea Grant carries out NOAA's mission of stewardship of our country's oceans and atmospheres through a broadly based network of universities.

Through its researchers, educators and outreach specialists, the NOAA National Sea Grant College Program generates, translates, and delivers unbiased information to help address complex coastal issues and promising coastal opportunities. At the regional level, Sea Grant recently conducted bottom-up research and information needs assessments in each region, with broad engagement with stakeholders, including state and local government units, mayors, and community groups.

This Federal Funding Opportunity supports implementation of NOAA's Next Generation Strategic Plan (<http://www.ppi.noaa.gov/ngsp.html>) by supporting:

- 1) A climate-literate public that understands its vulnerabilities to a changing climate and makes informed decisions;
- 2) Sustainable fisheries and safe seafood for healthy populations and vibrant communities;
- 3) Comprehensive ocean and coastal planning and management;
- 4) Improve understanding, planning, and environmental protection in the Arctic;
- 5) Support recovery in the Gulf of Mexico; and/or
- 6) Improved understanding of ecosystems to inform resource management decisions.

#### B. Program Priorities

It is a programmatic priority for this competition to fund projects that meet the evolving demands of regional stakeholders where both NOAA Sea Grant College Program and the NOAA Regional Teams:

- 1) strengthen linkages between Sea Grant programs and the NOAA Regional Teams;
- 2) advance new insights or approaches to engagement with stakeholders at the local level;

3) demonstrate a link to the overarching NOAA Next Generation Strategic plan;

4) improve coordination between NOAA and Sea Grant through better integration of one or more regional collaboration activities in communications, education and/or extension and training; and

5) develop a strong foundation for future engagement activities with key NOAA constituencies.

#### C. Program Authority

33 U.S.C. 1121 et seq.

### II. Award Information

#### A. Funding Availability

Up to eight grants (one per NOAA region) of up to \$30,000 are expected to be awarded through a competitive process, subject to the availability of funds. These regional engagement grants will be awarded only to proposals endorsed jointly by the NOAA Regional Teams and the Sea Grant programs in the region. Requests for individual projects may not exceed \$30,000. NOAA employees, non-Federal applicants, or both, are eligible to receive funds on each proposal. Funds to NOAA employees will be awarded by intra-agency transfers rather than grants.

#### B. Project/Award Period

The anticipated start date is October 1, 2011, with projects to be completed within 24 months of the start date.

#### C. Type of Funding Instrument

Awards to non-Federal applicants will be made as cooperative agreements. A cooperative agreement differs from a grant in that it includes substantial involvement by the granting agency. In this case, the substantial involvement is expected to involve significant participation by, and collaboration between, the NOAA and non-Federal co-principal investigators on the project.

Awards to NOAA employees will be made by intra-agency transfers to the employees' operating units. All funds thus transferred must be obligated in the fiscal year they were transferred.

Because payments to NOAA and non-Federal entities are made differently, it is essential

that any application requesting support for both NOAA and non-Federal investigators clearly describe how much funding is going to each party, following the instructions given in Section IV.B., below.

### III. Eligibility Information

#### A. Eligible Applicants

Only NOAA entities or Sea Grant institutions are eligible to apply. An award may have a component that goes to a non-Federal entity and a component that goes to a NOAA employee. The sum of the components cannot exceed \$30,000.

#### B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

There is no matching requirement.

#### C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

Only applications that include a co-signed letter of endorsement from the Regional NOAA Team Lead and Sea Grant Director liaison to the NOAA Regional Teams (selected among the Sea Grant Directors in the region) are eligible. Information on the Regional Teams, Team Leads, and Sea Grant liaisons is available at <http://www.ppi.noaa.gov/reco.html> and [http://www.seagrants.noaa.gov/regional/NOAA\\_liasons.html](http://www.seagrants.noaa.gov/regional/NOAA_liasons.html).

### IV. Application and Submission Information

#### A. Address to Request Application Package

Application materials are available through grants.gov. Other forms that may be included in the application are available at <http://www.seagrants.noaa.gov/funding/forms.html>. If an applicant does not have internet access, please contact Chris Hayes at the address listed in section VII. Agency Contacts.

#### B. Content and Form of Application

1. Completed forms required by the grants.gov application package. Any application package that funds a NON-FEDERAL entity must include two forms: the "Request for Federal Assistance Form SF-424" and the "Budget Information for Nonconstruction Programs Form SF-424A". Those two forms are used to calculate the amount of funding requested by NON-FEDERAL INVESTIGATORS. When filling out these two forms, include ONLY the funding going to NON-FEDERAL INVESTIGATORS. These two forms are used to determine the size of the cooperative agreement with non-federal entities if this

proposal is selected, and must not include any funding requested for NOAA investigators.

2. Title Page. The title page must provide a title for the Project, identify the NOAA and the Sea Grant Principal Investigators and any additional Project Leaders, and provide their institutional affiliations, complete addresses, telephone, FAX, and e-mail information. The title page must list the total amount of Federal funds being requested for NOAA investigators, the total amount requested for non-Federal investigators, the total amount of any optional (will not affect selection of the proposal) matching funds proposed, and the sources of those matching funds. An optional template for this title page is provided on [http://www.seagrant.noaa.gov/funding/forms/Collab\\_Title\\_Page.doc](http://www.seagrant.noaa.gov/funding/forms/Collab_Title_Page.doc)

3. A summary and narrative description (maximum of 4 pages, additional pages will not be reviewed) must include:

- Statement of need - explain the stakeholder engagement needs that will be addressed, include a clearly articulated needs assessment.
- Description of how the project builds new outreach capacity or broadens the geographic or thematic scope of regional engagement.
- Brief project plan - explain how the project will be implemented across the region, including the roles of the NOAA and non-Federal investigators.
- Description of how the project effectiveness will be determined.
- Statement which NOAA mission goals outcomes, objectives or engagement strategies the project addresses. Information on NOAA goals, objectives and strategies can be found at <http://www.ppi.noaa.gov/NGSP3/plan.html> .

4. A budget breakdown of the support requested for non-Federal investigators on a Sea Grant 90-4 form (OMB Control No. 0648-0362). (This form is available at <http://www.seagrant.noaa.gov/funding/forms.html>.) The information on this 90-4 form must be included for any application with a NON-FEDERAL INVESTIGATOR and must agree with the information on the Standard Form 424A described above.

5. A second budget breakdown for support requested for NOAA investigators must be included for any application with a FEDERAL INVESTIGATOR, on a second 90-4 form.

6. An overall budget breakdown showing the total support requested, on a third 90-4 form must be included for any project with both FEDERAL and NON-FEDERAL INVESTIGATORS. The values on this 90-4 form must equal the sum of the other two 90-4 forms. The total request must not exceed \$30,000.

7. NEPA Questionnaire

The application does not require the NOAA NEPA questionnaire at this point.

#### C. Submission Dates and Times

Applications are due by 5:00 p.m. (EDT) June 3, 2011. The timeliness of applications received through Grants.gov will be determined by the date and time indicator included when applications are submitted. Hard copy applications will be date and time stamped when they are received. Applications received after the deadline will be rejected without further consideration.

#### D. Intergovernmental Review

Applications under this Program are not subject to Executive Order 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs."

#### E. Funding Restrictions

No special restrictions apply.

#### F. Other Submission Requirements

Any application that requests any funding to non-Federal entities must be submitted through Grants.gov, using FFO number NOAA-OAR-SG-2011-2002938. If an eligible applicant can prove he/she does not have internet access, contact Chris Hayes listed in section VII. Agency Contact, below, for submission instructions.

If an application includes no requested funding for non-NOAA entities (that is, all requested funding would go to NOAA entities), do not submit the application through Grants.gov. Contact Chris Hayes listed in VII. Agency Contacts, below, for submission instructions.

### V. Application Review Information

#### A. Evaluation Criteria

1. Importance/relevance and applicability of proposal to the Program goals: This criterion ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NOAA, federal, regional, state, or local activities. The importance/relevance and applicability of proposal to the Program goals represents 20% of the total score.

2. Technical/scientific merit: This criterion assesses whether the approach is technically sound and/or innovative, if the methods are appropriate, and whether there are clear project goals and objectives. The Technical/scientific merit represents 20% of the total score.

3. Overall qualification of applicants: This criterion ascertains whether the applicant possesses the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project. The overall qualification of applicants represents 20% of the total score.

4. Project costs: This criterion evaluates the budget to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and timeframe. The project cost represents 20% of the total score.

5. Outreach and education: This criterion assesses whether the project provides a focused and effective education and outreach strategy regarding NOAA's mission to protect the Nation's natural resources. The outreach and education component represents 20% of the total score.

#### B. Review and Selection Process

An initial administrative review is conducted to determine eligibility, compliance with requirements and completeness of the application.

Proposals will be evaluated against the above criteria by a panel composed of Federal employees, who provide technical ratings and comments and suggestions for improvement. The Selecting Official will consider these ratings when deciding which applications should be selected for award. Comments and suggestions from the panel will be supplied to the applicant to potentially improve the project proposal.

#### C. Selection Factors

The Selecting Official shall recommend to the NOAA Grants Officer to award in rank order unless a proposal is justified to be selected out of rank based upon one or more of the following factors:

1. Availability of funding
2. Balance and distribution of funds
  - a. Geographically
  - b. By type of institutions
  - c. By type of partners
  - d. By research areas
  - e. By project types
3. Duplication of other projects funded or considered for funding by NOAA or other

## Federal agencies

4. Program priorities and policy factors as given in section 1B
5. Applicant's prior award performance, including timely submission of progress reports
6. Partnerships and/or Participation of targeted groups
7. Adequacy of information necessary for NOAA staff to make a National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) determination and draft necessary documentation before recommendations for funding are made to the Grants Officer.

Consequently, awards may not necessarily be made to the highest-scored proposals. Investigators may be asked to modify objectives, work plans, or budgets prior to approval of the award. Subsequent administrative processing will be in accordance with current NOAA grants procedures. A summary statement of the technical review by the peer panel will be provided to each applicant of a proposal.

### D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

Subject to the availability of funds, awards are expected to be made by October 1, 2011. Projects must be completed by September 30, 2013.

## VI. Award Administration Information

### A. Award Notices

Successful applicants will receive notification that the application has been recommended for funding to the NOAA Grants Management Division. This notification is not an authorization to begin performance of the project. Official notification of funding, signed by the NOAA Grants Officer, is the authorizing document that allows the project to begin. Notification will be issued to the Authorizing Official and the Principle Investigator of the project either electronically via Grants Online or in hard copy. Unsuccessful applicants will be notified that their proposal was not selected for recommendation.

To enable the use of a universal identifier and to enhance the quality of information available to the public as required by the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006, to the extent applicable, any proposal awarded in response to this announcement will be required to use the Central Contractor Registration and Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System and be subject to reporting requirements, as identified in OMB guidance published at 2 CFR Parts 25, 170 (2010),

[http://ecfr.gpoaccess.gov/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=ecfr&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfr25\\_main\\_02.tpl](http://ecfr.gpoaccess.gov/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=ecfr&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfr25_main_02.tpl) ,  
<http://ecfr.gpoaccess.gov/cgi/t/text/text->



[idxc=ecfr&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfr170\\_main\\_02.tpl](#) .

## B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

### 1. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE PRE-AWARD NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS FOR GRANTS AND COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS -

Administrative and national policy requirements for all Department of Commerce awards are contained in the Department of Commerce Pre- Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements contained in the Federal Register notice of February 11, 2008 (73 FR 7696). A copy of the notice may be obtained at <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/fr/search.html> .

2. LIMITATION OF LIABILITY - In no event will NOAA or the Department of Commerce be responsible for proposal preparation costs if these programs fail to receive funding or are cancelled because of other agency priorities. Publication of this announcement does not oblige NOAA to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds.

3. NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (NEPA) - NOAA must analyze the potential environmental impacts, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), for applicant projects or proposals which are seeking NOAA federal funding opportunities. Detailed information on NOAA compliance with NEPA can be found at the following NOAA NEPA website: <http://www.nepa.noaa.gov> , including our NOAA Administrative Order 216-6 for NEPA, [http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/NAO216\\_6.pdf](http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/NAO216_6.pdf) , and the Council on Environmental Quality implementation regulations, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/ceq/initiatives/nepa> . Consequently, as part of an applicant's package, and under their description of their program activities, applicants are required to provide detailed information on the activities to be conducted, locations, sites, species and habitat to be affected, possible construction activities, and any environmental concerns that may exist (e.g., the use and disposal of hazardous or toxic chemicals, introduction of non-indigenous species, impacts to endangered and threatened species, aquaculture projects, and impacts to coral reef systems).

In addition to providing specific information that will serve as the basis for any required impact analyses, applicants may also be requested to assist NOAA in drafting of an environmental assessment, if NOAA determines an assessment is required. Applicants will also be required to cooperate with NOAA in identifying feasible measures to reduce or avoid any identified adverse environmental impacts of their proposal. The failure to do so shall be grounds for not selecting an application. In some cases if additional information is required after an application is selected, funds can be withheld by the Grants Officer under a special award condition requiring the recipient to submit additional environmental compliance information sufficient to enable NOAA to make an assessment on any impacts that a project

may have on the environment.

### C. Reporting

Regardless of funding instrument, all award recipients will be required to submit financial and performance (technical) mid-year and final reports. These reports must be submitted electronically unless the recipient does not have Internet access, in which case hard copy submissions will be accepted. All hardcopy financial reports must be submitted in triplicate (one original and two copies) to the NOAA Grants Officer.

The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 includes a requirement for awardees of applicable Federal grants to report information about first-tier subawards and executive compensation under Federal assistance awards issued in FY 2011 or later. All awardees of applicable grants and cooperative agreements are required to report to the Federal Subaward Reporting System (FSRS) available at [www.FSRS.gov](http://www.FSRS.gov) on all subawards over \$25,000.

## VII. Agency Contacts

Requests for information regarding the Sea Grant-NOAA Regional Team Collaboration Grants 2011 should be directed to Mr. Chris Hayes; via e-mail at [oar.hq.sg.competitions@noaa.gov](mailto:oar.hq.sg.competitions@noaa.gov) ; Mailing Address: NOAA Sea Grant; 1315 East-West Highway, SSMC3, R/SG; Silver Spring, MD 20910.

## VIII. Other Information

none.